

that the whistleblower principally directed, planned, or initiated. Similarly, if the Commission determines that a whistleblower is eligible for an award, any amounts that the whistleblower or such an entity pay in sanctions as a result of the action or related actions will not be included within the calculation of the amounts collected for purposes of making payments pursuant to § 165.14.

**§ 165.18 Staff communications with whistleblowers from represented entities.**

If the whistleblower is a whistleblower who is a director, officer, member, agent, or employee of an entity that has counsel, and the whistleblower has initiated communication with the Commission relating to a potential violation of the Commodity Exchange Act, the Commission's staff is authorized to communicate directly with the whistleblower regarding the subject of the whistleblower's communication without seeking the consent of the entity's counsel.

**§ 165.19 Nonenforceability of certain provisions waiving rights and remedies or requiring arbitration of disputes.**

The rights and remedies provided for in this part 165 of the Commission's regulations may not be waived by any agreement, policy, form, or condition of employment, including by a predispute arbitration agreement. No predispute arbitration agreement shall be valid or enforceable if the agreement requires arbitration of a dispute arising under this part.

**APPENDIX A TO PART 165—GUIDANCE WITH RESPECT TO THE PROTECTION OF WHISTLEBLOWERS AGAINST RETALIATION**

Section 23(h)(1) of Commodity Exchange Act prohibits employers from engaging in retaliation against whistleblowers. This provision provides whistleblowers with certain protections against retaliation, including: A federal cause of action against the employer, which must be filed in the appropriate dis-

trict court of the United States within two (2) years of the employer's retaliatory act; and potential relief for prevailing whistleblowers, including reinstatement, back pay, and compensation for other expenses, including reasonable attorney's fees.

(a) *In General.* No employer may discharge, demote, suspend, threaten, harass, directly or indirectly, or in any other manner discriminate against, a whistleblower in the terms and conditions of employment because of any lawful act done by the whistleblower—

(1) In providing information to the Commission in accordance with this part 165; or

(2) In assisting in any investigation or judicial or administrative action of the Commission based upon or related to such information.

(b) *Enforcement—(1) Cause of Action.*—An individual who alleges discharge or other discrimination in violation of section 23(h)(1)(A) of the Commodity Exchange Act may bring an action under section 23(h)(1)(B) of the Commodity Exchange Act in the appropriate district court of the United States for the relief provided in section 23(h)(1)(C) of the Commodity Exchange Act, unless the individual who is alleging discharge or other discrimination in violation of section 23(h)(1)(A) of the Commodity Exchange Act is an employee of the Federal Government, in which case the individual shall only bring an action under section 1221 of title 5, United States Code.

(2) *Subpoenas.*—A subpoena requiring the attendance of a witness at a trial or hearing conducted under section 23(h)(1)(A) of the Commodity Exchange Act may be served at any place in the United States.

(3) *Statute of Limitations.*—An action under section 23(h)(1)(B) of the Commodity Exchange Act may not be brought more than 2 years after the date on which the violation reported in Section 23(h)(1)(A) of the Commodity Exchange Act is committed.

(c) *Relief.*—Relief for an individual prevailing in an action brought under section 23(h)(1)(B) of the Commodity Exchange Act shall include—

(1) Reinstatement with the same seniority status that the individual would have had, but for the discrimination;

(2) The amount of back pay otherwise owed to the individual, with interest; and

(3) Compensation for any special damages sustained as a result of the discharge or discrimination, including litigation costs, expert witness fees, and reasonable attorney's fees.